

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

SSB 5152

Title: *An act relating to allowing the department of social and health services access to employment security department data on clients in the job opportunities and basic skills training program and any subsequent state welfare program.*

Brief Description: *Allowing the department of social and health services access to employment security department data on clients in the job opportunities and basic skills training program and any subsequent state welfare program.*

Sponsors: *Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Prince, Bauer, Wojahn, Horn, Oke, Winsley and Patterson; by request of Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee).*

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Meeting Date: *March 27, 1997.*

Bill Analysis Prepared by: *Dave Knutson (786-7146).*

Background: *Under federal welfare reform enacted in 1996, states are now required to track the numbers of welfare recipients participating in welfare-to-work programs. Federal aid is based on these figures, with states not meeting the federal standard receiving a reduced block grant.*

The Employment Security Department (ESD) maintains confidential employment records. Any information considered to be private or confidential under state and federal laws may not be released, except in very limited circumstances. Examples of these exceptions include sharing information given voluntarily to the ESD for statistical analysis or research purposes, and the release of information to the federal government in connection with or as a condition of funding for a program being administered by the department.

Summary of Bill: *The DSHS will provide the ESD with quarterly reports of names and social security numbers of people in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) training program and any subsequent state welfare program. In return, the DSHS is allowed access to confidential employer wage files of these same people, which are held by the ESD and are currently protected from disclosure. Both agencies will enter into a formal data-sharing agreement meant to protect the privacy of the confidential records being supplied. This information is to be used solely for measuring the work force participation of people in the JOBS program*

and any subsequent state welfare program. Any data supplied for the statistical analysis is protected by federal and state law, and the terms and conditions of the governing interagency agreement.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*